1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

east countries, but it is not the elaborate caste system of India.

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Regional division of labor plays only a small role. When it does occur, as in case of the "burnos"-weaving and carpet-making of spots in Semyen, which survived until recently, it is a case of local survival of a craft that has experienced culture loss, fallen into disuse elsewhere. This is also believed to be true with regard to viticulture which seems to have been lost during the 19th century southeast of Lake Tana. It is the story of ancient Aksum all over again, where a 1700-year old stone cistern is to this day the major water supply and a marvel to the present inhabitants, as are the obelisks, stone steps, etc. where regional specialization does play some role, it is in a very limited sense. Certain districts of Begemdir province, for example, are more inhabited by Falashas than others, and the iron plowpoints and pottery may be preferred from there, especially in the dry season when travel is possible. The better togas are made by Muslim Ethiopians in suburban Gondar town. Hamlets of tanners are also encountered more often in the vicinity of a town like Gondar. Since so many basic crafts are handed down only in the family system, modern changes de-emphasizing the family economy, plus importation via Italian-built roads, will increasingly cause culture loss, especially in the rural districts. Already the contemptuous reference to "balagar sera" (rustic workmanship) are beginning to heard among urban Amhara (e.g. in connection with the plow and pottery).

443 or green ones for "alecha" meat sauce; tyeff grain; imported and native spices; linseed and nug oil seeds; firewood; chickens; donkeys and sheep and goats, but no more expensive livestock. Approaching feasts, fasts and rainy season change the emphasis and variety of products and activities.

438 The big Saturday market emphasizes items of long-distance trade such as salt, from the lowland plain of Areho, in Danakil, bordering on French Somaliland. Bricks of this coarse-grained salt "Amolye" were formerly used as money, their value increasing with the distance from the place of origin. This has been gradually discontinued during the reign of the present Emperor, and salt is now also imported in crushed pebbles from the Sudan, called "Senar" after the area of origin. The big bar has become rare, is called "lemadaw", and costs from Eth$4.- for a big one to Eth$ 50¢ for a little one.

438 439 Coffee comes from Jimma. Raw cotton is sold by weight, from the Matamma border of the Sudan, brought on camel back. Spices (e.g. abusda) and incense come from as far as Yemen. Razor blades come from England. Imports from the Sudan include much cotton cloth: "abujedid" for shirt-making, more expensive cotton "stock" material, and now also khaki cloth for shorts and modern bush jackets.

439 [65] Import duty is high, as much as Eth$9.- per "taga", about 45 meters. Some raw cotton is domestic, from the petit market of the Wolkait jungle border. "Taga"

439 some spices, English razorblades, sewing needles, safety pins, Lux soap in hotelroom size, laundry soap cake, [442] kerosene, etc. The wholesalers, usually Arabs, buy these [443] and sell them to Muslim Ethiopian retailers. Sometimes, in bigger towns, Arabs open regular stalls and even stores to sell these items daily, as well as special luxuries such as chocolate, hard candy, and products of the central Ethiopian government such as matches (a government monopoly), cigarettes for Muslims (also a government monopoly), school notebooks with the picture of the Emperor on the title page, pencils, imported readymade eyeglasses, etc. On their return trips the trente-quatro trucks are heavily laden with produce such as tyeff, nug, linseed, peas, beans, honey, sheepskins, cowhides, and in some areas musk from the civet cat, and coffee.

438 The purchases of the farmer consist in greater part of items from other areas of Ethiopia, notably, salt, coffee, spices, some of the raw cotton and matches. Much of this is still carried by traditional caravan, where no roads exist or where they have been washed out. Caravans form after the middle of the dry season, and return just before the rainy season, so that the farmer can stock up on staples.

435 To pay for these purchases and for some of the imported items such as razor blades, the farmer brings his produce, but prices fluctuate between seasons, with every arrival or departure of caravans (or trucks), and with distance. For example, 1 quintal (100 kilos) of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

impressions conveyed by much of the literature on Ethiopia, is not a normal ecological unit in Amhara society.

Each homestead gives the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy, but it is bound to a wider social context in a number of ways. While satisfying most of its consumption needs by its own efforts, every household depends on the market for certain items. The highland peasants must go to market for their chili, onions, peppers, hops, and cotton; while lowland peasants must barter for barley and sheep there. Salt and foreign fabrics must be imported from afar, and iron and clay products must be bought from specialists who bring their wares. Limited needs for currency—chiefly for rifles and, since 1942, taxes—are also met at the market.

The markets normally are held once a week. Every homestead is within walking distance of at least one market; though often the trip may take several hours, at times the greater part of a day. Markets in the same region are often scheduled on different days, so that, for example, the family which misses the one five hours to the north on Saturday can catch another four hours to the south on Tuesday. The virtual absence of roads throughout the countryside makes travel to market slow and tedious, but wealthier peasants nonetheless manage to transport quantities of grain and livestock to the provincial capitals for better prices and a wider selection of consumers' goods.

The household is linked to a wider world politically as well as economically. By providing tithes, revenues, military service, and corvée labor, the peasant has traditionally been obliged to support an extensive political hierarchy. In return for this he has received an organization for defending the country against enemies, and a structure of legitimate authority sufficient to maintain order and settle disputes.

The peasant's relations with this political hierarchy have been mediated by the office of *chĭqā shum*, a district headman. This office is circulated, usually annually, among a small number of men whose eligibility is based on their ownership of certain pieces of land. As the land passes from father to son, so does the eligibility for being *chĭqā shum*.

Traditionally the *chĭqā shum* was a role of considerable importance. It carried the duties of tax collection, adjudication, promulgation of official decrees, supervision of occasional work projects, levying of men for military service, and officiating at civil marriages and divorces. Through his work the *chĭqā shum* received a variety of fees and bribes. In cases of flagrant misbehavior the local people were able to dismiss him from office. The reorganization of provincial administration since 1942 has deprived the *chĭqā shum* of many of his former powers, but the office still exists and plays a modest role in peasant life.

The district over which a *chĭqā shum* has authority is the closest thing to a village unit among the Amhara. It is usually coterminous with the area sur-